

Title: **Governance Challenges Facing African Fisheries**

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Abstract: We examine the realities of selected African fisheries, and assess the extent to which the existing governance assumptions and management arrangements are appropriate. Fisheries management in sub-Saharan Africa is largely derived from a target resource management paradigm, with interventions largely focussed on limiting fishing effort for single stocks. We argue that this approach is appropriate for commercial fisheries, and that the main challenge is effective monitoring control and surveillance (MCS). For the artisanal and subsistence sectors which dominate African fisheries, the target resource management approach is often inappropriate, as is the no management approach. In the context of poverty where few other livelihood options exist, poorly conceived interventions (sometimes promoted as co-management but still essentially target resource focussed), create new problems, conflicts and perverse incentives amongst communities. A problem is that the governance assumptions underlying fishery departments management interventions are often at odds with traditional fishing practises, and departments lack manpower capacity capable of facilitating negotiated governance solutions. Experience shows that in a context of poverty, policy needs to be focussed more broadly on developing livelihoods based on the economy of all resources at the disposal of the community. If such a people centred approach is adopted, it needs to be accepted that the fishing of certain target species may not be sustainable due to uncontrollable fishing effort. MPAs may thus be one of the few tools available to mitigate this impact, and ensure species survival.